



Government of the District of Columbia
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor



Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
Soohyun Julie Koo, Director

January 8, 2010

Dear Language Access Coordinator:

The Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) is committed to supporting your efforts to reach out to the DC API linguistically- and non-English speaking (LEP/NEP) populations. We seek to support your Agency in data collection, outreach, bilingual hiring and cultural competency. To this effort we've developed the publication, *Reach Out: Connecting with Asian and Pacific Islanders*. This document can provide basic support in the aforementioned areas that OAPIA provides support. The toolkit is divided in four major sections:

1. **Data and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans** – provides tips and guidance on how to collect data on the API community and is supplemented with an online component of articles and information about the API community issues that can be found at www.apia.dc.gov.
2. **Outreach and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans** – provides basic tips on conducting outreach to the API community and a special section on engaging the API community in long term government – community partnership initiatives. This section contains a case study of a project in Chinatown between the Office of Planning and Chinatown community.
3. **Cultural Competency and Asian Pacific Islander Americans** – provides background information on various API communities you may encounter.
4. **Bilingual Hiring and Asian Pacific Islander Americans** – provides resources you can access to find bilingual candidates.

The toolkit will also be available on our website and updated on a yearly basis to include new information and more information that will assist you in your work. Some of the uses of the toolkit include:

- a reference guide for new employees who will be working with the API community – new employees can become familiar with the API community and gain an understanding of some of the tools available to them;
- a recipe for engaging the API community – the publication provides overarching guidance which can be supplemented with consultation from OAPIA on developing a partnership;
- a resource guide for cultural competency trainings – the fact sheets provide basic information on cultures and are useful if a new population emerges or staff are interested in certain Asian cultures;
- a Information bank (online) – staff can learn about the latest and more prevalent issues by subject matter area in the API population both nationally and locally; and

I hope this guide is useful to you your Agency staff and will help you to build your capacity to serve the API residents and merchants of the District of Columbia. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions please contact me at neel.saxena@dc.gov or 202-727-0729.

Sincerely,

Neel Saxena

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